

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of the claims replaces all prior versions and listings of the claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A process for the preparation of a silica sol[[,]]
~~wherein comprising reacting a fresh sol is reacted~~ with guanidine carbonate.
2. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, wherein the reaction with guanidine carbonate is ~~carried out~~ conducted in the presence of a base.
3. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 2, wherein the base is selected from the group consisting of sodium water glass, potassium water glass, potassium hydroxide, ~~and/or~~ sodium hydroxide and combinations thereof.
4. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as in any of claims 1 to 3~~ of claim 2, wherein the reaction is carried out at a reaction temperature and at a pH of from 8 to 12, the pH being measured at the reaction temperature.
5. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4~~ of claim 1, wherein ~~the preparation of the silica sol is effected~~ said process is conducted continuously.
6. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5~~ of claim 2, wherein the fresh sol and an aqueous solution of guanidine carbonate are fed continuously into a reactor, said reaction being conducted at,
a pH of from 8 to 12, and
a reaction temperature of from 25°C to 100°C, ~~being established and~~
further wherein the an average residence time being is selected chosen so such that

the silica sol prepared has a BET surface area of $\geq 100 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$.

7. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 6, wherein the ~~reaction is carried out at a~~ said reaction temperature ~~of~~ is from 80 to 100°C.

8. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in either of claim~~[[s]] 6 and 7, wherein an additional base is added into the reactor.

9. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in any of claim~~[[s]] 6 ~~to~~ 8, wherein the reactor is a multistage reactor cascade having a first reactor, ~~the starting material preferably~~ said fresh sol and an aqueous solution of guanidine carbonate being fed to the first reactor.

10. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 9, wherein the pH, measured at the reaction temperature, is from 8 to 12 in all reactors of the multistage reactor cascade, and the reaction temperature in the first reactor is kept at from 25°C to 100°C, and the reaction temperature that in the each further reactor[[s]] is kept at from 60°C to 100°C.

11. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in any of claim~~[[s]] 1 ~~to~~ 4, wherein the reaction is ~~effected~~ conducted batchwise, the guanidine carbonate being in the form of an aqueous solution of guanidine carbonate, at least said process comprising,

introducing initially a part of the fresh sol and the aqueous solution of guanidine carbonate ~~being initially introduced into a reactor, resulting in the formation of a remainder comprising said fresh sol and said aqueous solution of guanidine carbonate, said remainder not being initially introduced into said reactor,~~ and the

metering subsequently said remainder of the fresh sol and of the aqueous solution of guanidine carbonate being metered into the reaction mixture reactor, and

~~the holding said reactor at a temperature being established so such~~ that an amount of solvent which corresponds to the amount of ~~metered said~~ remainder of ~~the fresh sol and of the aqueous solution of guanidine carbonate~~ evaporates from said reactor, thereby concentrating said silica sol.

12. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in any of claim[[s]] 1 to 14,~~ wherein ~~concentration~~ further comprising concentrating said silica sol by a method selected from the group consisting of evaporation of the solvent ~~or and by~~ ultrafiltration, ~~wherein the concentration step is effected~~ conducted during or after the reaction of fresh sol with guanidine carbonate.

13. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]] The silica sol[[,]] obtainable~~ prepared by [[a]] the process as claimed in any of claim[[s]] 1 to 12.

14. (Currently Amended) A silica sol having a BET surface area of from 100 to 1200 m²/g, ~~which contains~~ wherein said silica sol comprises from 0.05 to 15% by weight of guanidinium ions, based on the total weight of the silica sol.

15. (Currently Amended) The silica sol ~~as claimed in of claim 13 or 14, which~~ has wherein said silica sol has a BET surface area of from 300 to 1200 m²/g.

16. (Currently Amended) The silica sol ~~as claimed in any of claim[[s]] 13 to 14,~~ which wherein said silica sol has a pH of from 2 to 12.

17. (Currently Amended) The silica sol ~~as claimed in any of claim[[s]] 13 to 14,~~ which wherein said silica sol is not stabilized with aluminum and ~~contains no~~ is free of amine.

18. (Currently Amended) The silica sol ~~as claimed in any of claim[[s]] 13 to 14,~~ which wherein said silica sol has a molar SiO₂/N ratio of from 2 to 20.

19. (Currently Amended) The silica sol ~~as claimed in any of claim[[s]] 13 to 18~~ 14, which ~~wherein said silica sol~~ has a zeta potential of from -20 to -80 mV.

20. (Currently Amended) The silica sol ~~as claimed in any of claim[[s]] 13 to 19~~ 14, which ~~wherein said silica sol~~ has an IR ~~band position of the Si-O stretching vibration~~ IR band position at a wave number of from 1113 cm⁻¹ to 1080 cm⁻¹.

21. (Currently Amended) ~~The use of~~ A paper retention aid comprising the silica sol ~~as claimed in any of claim[[s]] 13 to 20 in paper retention~~ 14.